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DON'T FORGET:
THERE IS ONLY REMEMBERING

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> *"There is no teacher, there is no student,*
> *There is only remembering."*
> — Robert A. Monroe, "Ultimate Journey"

How can one forget some of the most powerful, significant and potentially transformative experiences of one's life?

I've been pondering this mystery because a coincidence of sorts led me to begin reading through my old journals, dating from the early 1990s, around the time I began experimenting with Monroe audio technology at home (years before I would get to the Monroe Institute for my Gateway Voyage program). Almost immediately, I noticed two results: (1) my dreams were often much more vivid and powerful; and (2) my ability to recall my dreams was greatly enhanced.

I also came to appreciate that our word "dream" is a vague, clumsy term that covers a dizzyingly wide variety of experiences and phenomena. Much like "food" can refer to a cup of plain yogurt, an unforgettably sumptuous, multi-course gourmet meal and everything in-between.

Bearing this analogy in mind, what follows are two of my forgotten higher end "dreams"—vivid experiences that blur the conventional lines between "dream" and "reality":

Ecstasy

I'm driving along Inman Avenue. Glancing at myself in my rear-view mirror, I notice that I am sporting a funny kind of cap that has strange, fold-down flaps on all sides, so you can't tell the front from the back. "How odd," I muse. I also notice that, where there should be office buildings, instead there is a beachfront shoreline, with the ocean only yards away. Suddenly it dawns on me that THIS IS A DREAM!!! As I realize this, I shout it from the rooftops: "THIS IS A DREAM!!!" Just then, I rise up clear through the roof of my car, and, just like Superman, soar into the sky like a rocket. Everything I see is sharp

and crystal clear and supercharged with an incredible energy and beauty: the sun pouring through the clouds, the ground below, and my own "body," every molecule of which is vibrating to such a pitch of intensity that I cannot tell anymore if it is pleasurable or painful. It is sheer, indescribable ECSTASY. I am free! Joyful! "IT'S ALL A DREAM!!!" I scream at the top of my lungs. I close my eyes as the joy pours through me. I feel as if I'm going to explode, as though I can't handle any more.

This was the most powerful lucid dream I'd ever had. I also believed that it was a springboard to a genuine out-of-body experience. I knew with utter certainty that I am more than my physical body. The significance of juxtaposing "Inman" (a real street name) and "Superman" is clear: In every human there is superhuman potential. The funny cap is a reminder that reality is of a piece; even the opposites coincide. All is One: the source of consciousness. This was the message of my epiphany: "IT'S ALL A DREAM!!!" What we call "reality" is nothing less than the creative, loving expression of the play of consciousness. Everyone and everything exist inside of consciousness as an exquisitely unique and valuable manifestation of its creative energies. We are dreams who dream.

Ceremony

We have gathered in the Great Lodge, where we eagerly await the arrival of the Holy One, who will bless and begin the ceremony. The men stand on one side, the women on the other. No one speaks. The atmosphere feels thick with tension and anticipation. I look across to where she is standing, and at that moment she looks up at me, and our eyes briefly meet before she shyly looks away. My heart pounds fiercely like a drum in my chest. I hope she chooses me! The scene fades, and the disembodied portion of my awareness now floats in utter blackness. Intuitively, I understand that I have just witnessed a kind of Sadie Hawkins ceremony among a Plains Indian tribe, perhaps the Sioux. All the participants are married, but the women get to choose sexual partners who are not their husbands for an adulterous tryst. This has something to do with celebrating the White Buffalo Calf Woman, the chief emissary of Mother Nature to the tribe.

When I awoke, I still felt the man's erotic yearning burning through my body like a wildfire. Had there been such a wild custom?

After some unsuccessful searches, I came across the lecture notes of an anthropology professor from Washington State that indicated there *was* such a custom—among, not the Sioux, but the Mandans, a Great Plains tribe that had lived in settled villages along rivers in the Dakotas, and whose language, spirituality and customs greatly influenced the Sioux.

Like the Sioux, the Mandans' main tribal ceremony was the annual Sun Dance, or Okipa. Its conclusion was a ritual called "The Feast of the Buffaloes," sponsored by a female member of the tribe who belonged to the White Buffalo Cow Society, and who played a major role in the Okipa. This ritual was exactly what I had seen in my dream: women choosing men who were not their husbands for a sexual relationship. But I knew

the professor erred in suggesting (his sole source being an obscure 1904 ethnography) that this was a celebration of fertility. What was being honored was not biological propagation, but the primacy of Nature and natural desire over Society and its mores; and it is White Buffalo Calf (Cow) Woman who represents Nature. *She* chooses. Passionate attraction is the electro-magnetism which binds lovers, atoms, molecules, star systems, galaxies and entire universes together. Creation is in love with itself.

Was my dream truly a memory fragment of a past life? I couldn't prove this. But it was truthful and accurate. It supplied valid historical information. Perhaps this was "just" retrocognition, or direct psychic perception of the past or clairvoyantly tapping into someone's current knowledge of the past. In any case, to me it was a stunning confirmation of consciousness transcending time and space.

And yet, I had forgotten it, just as I had forgotten my OBE ecstasy. Why? And how?

I noticed that in rereading these powerful dreams, I experienced an unsettling feeling of the uncanny. Could this frisson of discomfort be a clue to the source of my amnesia?

Plato famously declared that all true knowing is remembering. Our task is to consciously recollect that forgotten knowledge of our greater identity that we must set aside in order to participate as a limited, embodied individual in the game of physical matter reality. Hence our "default" move is always forgetting. We're here to play the game, after all.

Which is why the late Alan Watts said that there is a "taboo against knowing who you are." Some are fortunate enough (or is it karmically destined?) to experience spontaneous breakthroughs, like dramatic OBEs, NDEs, or UFO encounters, that rend the curtain of amnesia once and for all. This can also occur quite intentionally through some sort of disciplined inner practice. For the indigenous peoples of the world, such knowledge was built into their whole way of life, and the rituals that sustained it. But for those who are afforded only partial and fleeting glimpses behind the Wizard's curtain, the sheer weight of the curtain shuts itself each time.

The mechanism which closes the curtain, after we enjoy what philosopher Bernardo Kastrup calls our "brief peeks beyond," is the fear instinct: the sheer terror of annihilation. This fear is not so much of our physical death (though it can be that, too), but rather, of the loss of our illusions of being small, powerless, separate beings. This point has been made over the years by a number of consciousness researchers, including philosopher Michael Grosso, parapsychologist Kenneth Batcheldor, psychiatrist Stanislav Grof and author/UFO abductee Whitley Strieber.

Yet, there are other kinds of potent fears, well short of annihilation.

When I read my two dreams simply as stories and ask myself about their meaning as stories—their main ideas and themes—I find three powerful tropes: freedom, passion, and joy. Could these leitmotifs have triggered my great forgetting?

We live in a universe that is ultimately structured, not by space and time, or by matter

and energy, or even (as is so fashionable to think nowadays) by information and data, but rather, by *meaning*. That's what the phenomenon of synchronicity, or meaningful coincidence, tells us—the same kind of coincidence that led me back to my journals and my forgotten knowledge—meaning is subjective; it can only exist in and for consciousness. In order to expand our consciousness, then, we must deepen our sense and broaden our parameters of meaning. I forgot those dreams because I had not fully appreciated or integrated their meaning into my own life. That is my task.

Indeed, we must all have the courage to make room for freedom, passion and joy in our lives, so we can begin to remember who and what we really are.